

The One With the Loser's Club by mckentoz

Category: IT (Movies - Muschietti)

Genre: :(, :((), :(((, :((((, Eddie is Monica, F/M, Friends!AU, Homophobia, Internalized Homophobia, M/M, Pennywise (IT) Being an Asshole, Period-Typical Homophobia, Richie is Chandler, Ross sucks, Sonia Kaspbrak's A+ Parenting, also i havent wrote it yet but i think im going to make henry bowers gunther, also! its the 90s so thats fun, and to have been related to eddie at one point, ben is mike but like if mike was a part of the group, bev is phoebe, bill is rachel vaguely, but because i wanted mike to be a paleontologist, but just because he lives with richie, but like if monica was the one to have ran away from the wedding, but not as a inter-dimensional all-powerful evil clown, i promise my kids will not be sad all the time, just like Richie's boss, mike is baby, mike is ross, not because i think mike is in anyway like ross, richie but with 90s slang is a kind of power unseen in modern times, stan is joey, we shall see

Language: English

Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Mike Hanlon, Pennywise (IT), Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris

Relationships: Ben Hanscom/Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough/Beverly Marsh (past), Eddie Kaspbrak & Richie Tozier, Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier

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Summary:

In which, Eddie Kaspbrak has an identity crisis at the worst possible time, Mike just can't seem to catch a break, Stan is a photographer for a conspiracy magazine, Ben is deeply in love with Bev, Richie is pretending to be something he's not, Bill just wants to go on one successful date, and Bev keeps getting yelled at by old white ladies.

Being twenty-something is a wild time, but they can figure it out together.

A friends!au

1. The One with the Runaway Groom

Author's Note:

Hey, what's poppin y'all. It's your girl McKenna comin' at you with a hot take that I turned into a piece of literature. Eddie and Richie are basically Monica and Chandler respectively from Friends. This is the first piece of fanfiction that I've wrote since I was 11 and I am now a whole ass 17 years of age so please be kind. But also! I am open to constructive criticism just blease be nice to me. I have a very fragile emotional state. Also also this is definitely not going to exactly follow the plot of friends. Only like vaguely with some important plot points thrown in here and there. I really want to do one of the Thanksgiving episodes and the episode That Could Have Been, and a couple of other ones, and I have a vague outline of what needs to happen in this story but if you guys want to recommend some episode that you want to see I can try to fit that in!

Anyways, I figured I would do a pun of the chapter, because, you know, I want a fun lil' tradition. So anyways pun #1

"I couldn't quite remember how to throw a boomerang, but then it came back to me!"

Altogether it was an overall normal day for the five friends. They were all completely ignoring their respective jobs and, instead, hanging out at the local coffee shop and ragging on Bill for his recent choice of date. Bill had not gone on one successful date (that is a date that leads to a second date) in a year. Part of him wanted to blame Richie. The other part of him also wanted to blame Richie. Despite the man not living with him, Richie always seemed to be a constant presence in Bill's apartment, especially when Bill wanted the apartment alone to himself and his date. Therefore, Bill was desperate the find love. Even amongst his co-workers, whom he hated.

“F-fuck off guys. There’s nothing w-wrong w-with her. She’s just s-some girl from my work that asked m-me out. She’s really n-nice, plus she’s actually into me, t-therefore-”, he glared at Richie and Stan- “my apartment will be c-completely empty of any vultures who might want to r-ruin that.”

Richie and Stan both mocked offense. “How dare you Billy-boy, I was nothing but a gentleman to your last lady of the night,” Richie said putting his hand to his chest in fake outrage. “It’s not my fault that she didn’t appreciate my sense of humor. I would never purposely prevent you from getting some Bill-Bill. Who do you think I am?”

“A demon sent to earth to make my life a living hell.” Bill deadpanned.

“Wow, I’m hurt Billy, truly. Name one time that I’ve ever purposely caused any of you any harm.”

“Y-you told her s-she reminded you of M-mrs.Doubtfire.”

“And? Mrs. Doubtfire was a lovely lady. She should have taken it as a compliment.”

“M-mrs. Doubtfire was R-robin Williams in drag!” Bill protested.

“Exactly! And he made a very sexy lady. I couldn’t even concentrate on the hilarious hijinks and antics of the movie when we saw it together. All I could think of was what I would do to that ass if I got-”

“Beep- Beep Richie!” Bev yelled, leaning over Ben to smack Richie in the arm.

“One, ow, Bev. You fucker. Two, I can’t believe I’m the only one here who thinks that Lacie was secretly Robin Williams!” He looked to the right at Ben Hanscom who was very much trying to avoid his gaze, “Benny! I know for a fact you do. You told me you thought she looked like Popeye which, in my defense B-Boy, I thought was a bit harsh. I mean she couldn’t control that squinting eye that-”

“Well, uh, I think her name was Lilly...,” Ben squeaked looking apologetically at Bill who was now staring at Stan who was not so

secretly trying to prevent himself from laughing at the antics of his roommate, "...but... um... she was not so..."

He was interrupted by the sight of Bill giving him the middle finger (which, if Ben was being honest, wasn't fair as it should have been directed at Richie) but it was quickly lowered at a soaking, grimacing Mike Hanlon entering through Central Perks door, of which played a quick sound bite of a horrible sounding cover of TLC's "Waterfalls" anytime anyone walked in. This was a sight that made Richie light up with pure glee because he had never seen something so chock full of possible jokes.

However, because he was Richie, he ended up going with a classic, "Hey, Mikey what's got you down? I haven't seen anyone this glum since I told your mom that I was going to have to end my little soiree with her- if you know what I mean."

"Thanks, Rich," Mike frowned as he sat down in one of the chairs next to Bill. ("Sex. I meant sex with your mom," Richie said but it did not matter because no one was listening to him anymore)

"Well, it's official me and Crissy are legally separated. I signed the papers and moved my stuff into my new apartment this morning." As Mike ordered a chai green tea there was a rumble of mummers from the group along the lines of "Sorry, Mike," and even a "That sucks bro-ski," from Richie who was prompted by a pinch from Stan, even though Richie was more focused on the reason why Mike was wet despite it being a perfectly sunny day. Unfortunately for Richie, he would never get to know that information because Mike was more willing to eat his own hand then tell Richie Tozier that some kids from his new apartment complex had ambushed him with super soakers.

"Are you going to be alright man? I would be more than willing to kick Richie out of the apartment if you don't want to be alone tonight." Stan said as Richie gave him a look of false hurt.

"Nah, I think I'm good. It just sucks you know. I mean I'm only 25 and I've already been divorced. Who's going to want to date a guy who couldn't even make his marriage work for two years. I just-dating sucks," Mike sighed, "and I don't want to have to put myself

out there again. I just want to be married. Is that too much to-”

However, Mike was disrupted by the sound of the slightly off-key version of Waterfalls and the sight of a rushing, very frantic-looking man. Besides the fact that he seemed like he was on the verge of a panic attack, this man stood out specifically because of his odd combination of a tuxedo, a fanny pack that seemed to be full of various pill bottles, a boater hat, and a suitcase that was bursting at the seams. The man was rather short already but his tuxedo jacket falling off his shoulders and his pants that went past his shoes made him look even smaller. He was very obviously very distraught and it looked as though he might be searching for someone.

“And I just want a million dollars,” Richie said sarcastically looking up at the sky but when he looked back down to see his friends reactions no one was paying attention to him but rather the man with far too much gel in his hair for Richie’s taste, who was, for some reason, heading right towards where the six friends were sitting.

“Oh my god, Eddie? Is that you? What are you doing here?” Mike stood up and went over to the tuxedoed man, (whom Richie desperately wanted to compare to Mr. Toad) much to the shock of four of the five remaining sitting losers.

Even more confusingly, Eddie also seemed quite shocked at the sight of Mike coming up to see him. Eddie walked up to Mike obviously taken aback but he still hugged him nonetheless, “Um... hey Mike... um not to sound rude but what are you doing here? And why are you all wet?”

“Why am I all wet? Really man? Why are you dressed up like you just got married?”

“Well... I mean, I just did.”

There was a mumble of confusion throughout the group except for Richie who yelled out a “Congrats, man. She’s a lucky lady,” with his thumbs up.

“I’m sorry. I should have been clearer I didn’t get married. Well, actually, I was about to and then-” Eddie stopped when his eyes finally found Bill, whom he ran to as he began to cry. Bill kicked Stan and Richie off the couch they were on and led Eddie to sit down while rubbing his back sympathetically.

“G-guys,” Bill said looking up at the group, “t-this is Eddie. We went to high s-school together and h-he’s Mike’s ex-stepbrother.” He looked back down at Eddie, “B-but I haven’t s-seen you in years-s Eddie why now and why...like this?” he said gesturing to Eddie’s outfit choice.

Eddie looked back up at Bill, his eyes were red and his nose was sniffling. A look of apologetic realism grew on his face “Oh, you’re right I shouldn’t have come here. I just didn’t know where else I could go and I knew that you had a place in the city, so I’ve been running around the area going into different stores and apartments and I was going to give up but then I thought I saw Mike through the window and I know that you guys were friends in high school so I thought maybe you would be with him and I just-.”

“Whoa m-man, calm d-down. N-no one said that we didn’t want you h-here,” Bill threw an accusing glance that seemed to say “If-you-say-anything-stupid-I-swear-to-god-I-will- not-rest-until-I- destroy-you-Tozier,” at Richie at this point who immediately threw his hands in the air. “Just breathe, s-slow down and t-tell me what happened.”

Eddie took a deep breath. “Did you ever meet Myra?” He went on without waiting for an answer, “Nevermind that was a stupid question. Of course, you’ve never met Myra because if you had then you would have told me that I was making the worst decision of my life because she is truly an awful human being. Then I would have never found myself standing at the end of an aisle watching her walk towards me to the tune of the worst Scottish bagpipe quartet you’ve ever heard,” Richie sniggered at this, “...playing ‘Here Come the Bride’ at a truly awfully slow pace.”

“But it was then, as she got about halfway down the aisle that I realized just how much she looks like my mom. And then I started to think ‘Oh my god, she is my mom!’ and then I thought “Holy fuck, I can’t get married to my mom. I’m going to spend the rest of my life

being force-fed pills until I, one day, inevitably overdose on ibuprofen!'. And then the most truly terrifying revelation came like two seconds after that right before her and her dad approached the last step to get to the alter because I thought, 'Oh my god. I'd rather marry Myra's dad than her!' Which was a truly shocking revelation because he is not a looker let me tell you that. So I threw my engagement ring off my hand and ran away as fast as I could until I got to my apartment and packed all my things and realized that I couldn't go back and that I had nowhere else to go but here. Then I took the bus, which was absolutely disgusting by the way, and now I'm here."

He finished with a huge breath out because he had not taken a second to breathe throughout that entire rant and then he looked up at the group of four strangers, plus Mike and Bill, nervously. The six were all left speechless for a second trying to process and piece together what the short-man had just said to them.

It was Richie who broke the silence, "Well Edward-o I agree with you," he said wrapping his arm around Eddie's shoulders. "I don't think marrying your mom would have been a very good idea either as she and I are currently in a very committed, and serious relationship. That would really ruin the sex if you were there lying in bed with us. "

"B-beep fucking beep, Richie. D-don't you have a fucking job to do putting n-numbers into a computer or s-something." Bill said glaring at Richie.

"Oh fuck!" exclaimed Richie as he looked down at his watch dropping his arm from Eddie's shoulders. "I'm like three hours late. Fuck!" With that, he ran out of the door.

"He-he didn't pay for his coffee," Ben said as he watched the doors close behind Richie again. There was a resounding sound of "Not it!" between Stan, Ben, Bev, and Bill. Mike and Eddie looked around confused before realization dawned on Mike's face.

"Aw, fuck." Mike groaned. "I paid for that asshole the last three times he did this. He's never paid me back either."

"Did you expect him to?" implored Bev, a smirk on her face. "Besides you wouldn't have this problem if you just learned how the game goes." Mike sighed and pulled four bucks out of his wallet grumbling something that sounded like, "..fuckin' goblin man."

"Richie- is that his name? Why do you guys hang out with him? He seems like an asshole," Eddie asked as the sound of "Waterfalls" played around them a bit delayed.

"He seems like an asshole because he is an asshole. But Mike was roommates with him in college so if we want to hang out with Mike we also have to deal with the parasitic creature that comes with him that is Richie," said Bev. "But speaking of work I have to go. Because I am a competent adult I will not be getting there late, but if I don't leave now I will be." She turned to Eddie. "I'm Bev by the way. It was nice listening to your identity crisis but I do have to leave. I'm sure I'll see you later." And with that, she left the same way Richie had.

"You know someone better go with her it's getting pretty dark out," Ben said looking at the clock that said 12 p.m on it. "I should go with her. Nice meeting you Eddie." He ran quickly out of the door after Beverly.

Eddie turned to look at the rest of them. "Not to be rude but, don't the rest of you have jobs. I'm an adult. I'll be fine by myself for a bit if you need to go."

Stan stood up, walked over to Eddie, and shook his hand. "I'm Stan Uris and as a group, generally, we don't really have 'real jobs' per se. I'm a photographer for a shitty conspiracy magazine that does pretty much exclusively night shoots. You've probably never heard of it unless you're crazy or you've heard of the lawsuit where Jennifer Love Hewitt sued us for implying she killed the Kennedy's. Bill, over there is, as he describes it, an 'aspiring author', which basically means he's never been published and earns money by ghostwriting apologies for d-list celebrities through a temp agency. Mike here claims he has a real job but he spends his work hours studying dragons-"

"Dinosaurs." Mike corrected.

“Same thing,” said Stan ignoring Mike’s continued protests. “But he just got divorced so he has a pity day off work today. Ben was an architect for a while but quit to work at some non-profit library thing that isn’t open on Fridays, because I guess poor people don’t exist on Friday’s. Either way, he spends his Friday’s stalking Bev. And speaking of Bev, she’s an aspiring fashion designer, so she currently sells overpriced clothes to ugly rich old white ladies who yell at her. And then Richie- What does Richie do again?” Stan turned to look at the remaining group members.

“F-fuck if I k-know. Y-your t-the one t-that’s his roommate.” Bill pointed out.

“Okay well, Richie is something boring whose sole purpose is to feed into the corporate cog machine and none of us, including Richie, have bothered to figure out exactly what it is that he does. He wants to be a comedian but-“

“He’s an asshole,” Eddie finished.

Stan turned and grinned at Bill and Mike, “Oh I like him. We should keep him. But yeah anyway, don’t worry about the three of us Eddie, we’ve got nothing to do but pay attention to you.”

“S-speaking of p-paying attention to you,” Bill said “p-people are staring. Lets go up to m-my apartment and g-get you a new pair of clothes s-so you’ll look a bit less like Bert from M-mary P-poppins.”

Later, in Bill’s apartment, Eddie was pacing back and forth in the kitchen wearing, instead of his wedding tuxedo and hat, one of Bill’s Queen shirts and cargo pants, but he still had the fanny pack on for whatever reason. The six friends, three of which had recently gotten back from work, were sitting in the living room pretending to watch Days of Our Lives, but failing to look in any way like they weren’t eavesdropping on the conversation Eddie was having with his mother because the episode they were watching was, in fact, in German.

“-but Mommy.” (“Mommy” Richie mouthed to the rest of the group with a shit-eating grin on his face.) “I just can’t marry her- Why?- I just- I don’t love her- I can’t spend the rest of my life being controlled and told what to do by the women in my life. - No, I’m not saying I

don't love you mom- I- Just let me speak alright! I'm an adult man and I need to learn how to take care of myself and figure out who I am without my mom looking over my shoulder constantly- I know how to take my own medicine Ma I'm twenty-four. -I don't need your money mom. I have a college degree I can make money on my own. In the meantime, I'll just- I'll stay with Bill or-or Mike. You remember Bill right, from high school, and- and Mike just got divorced so he could take me in."

At this, all of the losers turned to look at Bill or Mike the latter of whom turned to Bill and said "Oh no, Eddie's great and all but I've already lived with him and his mother for five years. This one's all you, kid."

Eddie continued, not having heard the exchange between the two men. "What do you mean what does this have to do with me not marrying Myra?- Well I-Okay it's like my entire life people have been telling me I'm a hat and that I couldn't be anything but a hat. But when I was a teenager I found out that other people are shoes and that maybe everyone was wrong and that maybe I was a shoe. But then everyone told me that being a shoe was bad and that I had to be a hat or I would be diseased so I told myself that I could pretend to be a hat even though deep down I knew I was a shoe. Until this morning when I realized that I couldn't pretend to be a hat because otherwise, I'm-I'm spending the rest of my life lying to myself. Do you get what I mean ma?" Eddie hadn't taken a breath during his entire spiel besides taking a few puffs of his inhaler after every sentence.

"How many more times do you think he's going to say hat because if I'm being honest I have no idea what he's getting at with this metaphor and if it gets any more convoluted I'm going to leave. The Knicks are on," said Richie who was met with shushes and a few quiet "beep-beeps" from the people next to him.

"No, what? I-I don't need a new pair of shoe insulators Ma. That's not what I'm saying. What I'm saying is-what I was trying to tell you ma- No mom I'm not dying. Just let me say what I need to say!- Because!- I-I'm gay alright!" There was a long silence and Eddie looked like he was about to burst into tears. Richie was sitting up significantly more straight than he had been before and Ben quickly got up and turned off the T.V as there was no longer any point in pretending to watch

Kristian Alfonso throw wine at her co-stars in German any longer.

After a couple of minutes Eddie broke the silence in the room, still talking on the phone "No mom please- I'm not-I'm not disgusting, I'm-I'm still your son, Ma." He sounded almost frantic now his cries coming out in chokes, "Please don't call me that Ma- I-I can't control this part of me, I tried so hard for so long mom. You- you have no idea. I'm not any different than I was before I'm just- Just let me explain -No- I- Please mom! -Don't-" Eddie lowered the phone from his ear. He stared at the phone for a while a million thoughts running through his head, and yet none of them could comprehend what just happened to him. What he just did. What his mom had just said to him. It was something that he had imagined doing since he was fourteen years old, but now that he actually did it, he could not believe it was possibly real. Meanwhile, the six people in the living room looked around at each other trying to telecommunicate with each other what to do now.

"Goddammit!" Eddie yelled throwing the phone to the ground the noise-causing all of the losers to jump in their seats. "She- she -she fucking- I hate-!", but whatever Eddie hated would never be known because the rest of his sentence was drowned out by a deep sob as he slid his back down the counter cabinets until he was sitting on the ceramic floor with her hands around his legs and his head between his knees. Eddie had known that this conversation was not going to go well. He had known what his mom thought about "People like that" as she would described it to him when he was little. It was why he had tried so desperately hard to pretend otherwise for so long. But, in his heart, he had always held hope that, if he had ever gotten up the courage to tell her, maybe she would think differently because it was him. His mom had spent his entire childhood trying to keep him safe from harm and disease under the guise that she "loved him so much." So why, when he was actually fragile and weak and needed her to protect him, was she not here?

He knew the reason, of course. Eddie was naive to a lot of the wrongdoings that his mother had done to him, but he wasn't stupid. He knew while maybe his mom loved him, what she loved more was control. It still hurt though.

Bev was the first one to snap out of it as she ran from the living room

to the kitchen. She got down on her knees and started rubbing Eddie's back sympathetically, "Oh sweetie, I'm so sorry Eddie. That-I don't know what she said to you, but I know you didn't deserve it. I wish that I could change her mind and make her apologize to you. But I can't. And if she doesn't eventually come around then, well frankly, fuck her. You've got us. We'll be your family. I promise you that none of us are going to judge you for what kind of person you love. Right guys?"

She turned around to look at the rest of the boys in the apartment who were now all standing in the kitchen forming a sort of u-circle around Bev and Eddie. They all mumbled some form of assertion. "Right. Now, Bill and Stan go set up the extra room for Eddie. Mike and Ben go pick up some Chinese from Green Tiger-"

"Actually-" Eddie interrupted through sniffles, "Can we get food from somewhere else. Green Tiger almost failed their health inspection last year."

"How do you even know that? I thought you didn't live in the city?" implored Richie.

"Some of us aren't disgusting pigs who will literally eat the food we find on the sidewalk Richie," Stan threw back at Richie.

Richie gasped sarcastically, "How dare you, good sir. I told you that in confidence. Plus in my defense, the pizza was still in its box and it was from Sal's so.."

"We were all there to see that Richie," Mike said. "And that box had been there six days before you picked it up and said 'Someone bet me ten bucks to eat this pizza right now.' No one bet you that but you still ate it and then you stole twenty dollars out of my wallet."

"I got food poisoning for five days after that but it was worth it," Richie said smiling at the memory. "I bought Mario Kart: Super Circuit with that money."

"Anyways... Mike and Ben just- get some food from somewhere that got an A on its last health inspection and Richie, you are banned from the apartment until further notice." Bev ordered. Four of the

men left to go do what Bev told them to but Richie stayed where he was.

“Hey! You can’t kick me out! You don’t live here anymore.” Richie huffed.

“B-but I do,” Bill countered from what was soon to be Eddie’s room. “Richie you’re b-banned from the a-apartment.”

“You know it’s not fair for you all to gang up on me like this,” Richie announced to the room. “When I’m famous you’re all going to regret it.” He walked back over to the couch and turned the German Days of Our Lives back on.

The day went on, and by the time it was dark the gang were all sitting on the couch eating Greek with their new member. Eddie had calmed down a bit, the previous events of the day fading from his mind. He seemed to fit right in with this group of people, which was a phenomenon that Eddie never had happen to him before. Sure, he had had Bill and Mike in high school, but he was almost never allowed to do anything with Bill, or even Mike really, despite them living in the same house, because of the same reason it always was: Eddie’s mom. It was a nice change, he thought, to dinner with Myra who’d he had to strain to have conversations with and who would mostly just ignore what he said and complain about her day or criticize something about Eddie. It was in this moment that he realized despite what had happened with his mother, and the uncertainty of what he was going to do in the future, that there was no way he would be this happy if he had married Myra that morning. He would probably be pretending to enjoy himself at a Holiday Inn near Niagra Falls with Myra right now instead of watching Stan and Richie attempting to snort a noodle up their noses. It was an odd sight, but it was one that made him wonder how he could have ever gone his entire life never experiencing it. He couldn’t believe he almost let fear make him make an irreversible decision when this was all waiting for him all along. However, his thoughts were disrupted by a loud rasping at the door and a loud “Holy-fucking fuck! That hurts!” from Stan who had successfully snorted the noodle up his nose from the shock of the knock.

“S-shit!” Bill exclaimed as he shot up spilling his take-out on Richie.

“That’s M-Madeline, the girl from work. Fuck! I c-completely forgot.” He looked down at the grease-stained shirt he was wearing. “Richie—” he looked down at the man with rice and lamb sauce all over his head and lap, “-A-actually never mind. S-stan can you g-get the door for M-Madeline and explain the s-situation for me, w-while I get c-changed.”

“You got it, Bill.” Stan agreed.

“T-thanks Stan. Is t-this okay with you Eddie? I can t-totally cancel if you w-want m-me to and just hang out w-with you,” Bill asked.

Eddie waved him off. “No, go on your date. I’ll be fine. I think I need a little alone time to process everything anyway.”

“A-are you s-sure?” Bill said but he was already running into his room.

“Damn, someone is really desperate to get some. And speaking of who that some is-Madeline! What an absolute pleasure to meet you. I’m Richie but I’m sure you already knew that because of how much Bill probably talks about me at work.” Richie walked over to the girl who Stan had just let into the apartment with his hand extended, an idiotic smile on his face and rice falling off of his head as he did so.

Madeline took his hand reluctantly and squinted her eyes at Richie, “Are you the one that once made Bill late for work because you got your toe stuck in his toe stuck in your bathtub’s faucet?”

“Among other things,” Richie said with a suggestive smile on his face.

Bev pushed him aside and clarified, “Don’t listen to him. He’s an idiot. It was definitely just his toe. I’m Bev, one of the normal ones here. You must be Madeline.”

“Bev...” Madeline looked her up and down accusingly, “Oh I’ve heard about you. Aren’t you the ex of Bill’s that lived with him for a year, played with his emotions, cheated on him, and then broke his heart.”

Bev’s face dropped and turned a deep scarlet red, “Oh my god, that asshole! I did not cheat on Bill! Did he tell you that I did? I swear to god if that asshole-”

Madeline looked unconvinced, "No he didn't. I just..." she looked her up and down again, "...assumed."

At this point, Bev was both relieved that her relationship with one of her best friends was not about to end, and pissed off at this bitch Madeline. Unfortunately, Bev was a nice person and she wanted Bill's date, despite being with a bitch, to go well. So she swallowed her anger and mustered out, "Well I mean, I'd hardly say I broke his heart. We mutually decided to break up and that was over a year ago. Plus, we hang out all the time now and we've both moved on so," Bev chuckled a little bit to try to make light of the situation but it was obvious Madeline wasn't buying into it.

"Well- um- nice meeting you Madeline but I've got- um - a thing!" Bev looked around the room. She desperately wanted to leave before she said something to her and made things worse for Bill. "With Ben! Come on Ben lets go to the- um - thing." Ben shot up off the floor quickly and walked out of the room with Bev, Ben gave an awkward nod to Madeline as he left the room but she only stared at him.

Eddie, Mike, Stan, Richie, and Madeline all stood in awkward silence for what felt like hours but was probably only a couple of minutes. with the only interruption to the silence being when Richie fell after the dining room chair he was leaning on toppled over, until Bill burst out of his room still pulling his tie into a knot.

"M-madeline! I'm so s-sorry. I completely forgot about t-tonight. It's been a crazy d-day. Did S-stan explain the situation to you?" Bill looked over at Stan who just shrugged and mouthed "Richie". "Okay, well I'm going to take that as a no. H-here, I'll explain on t-the way to t-the restaurant." Madeline huffed a little bit at the situation, but she still walked towards the door anyways, waiting for Bill.

Bill turned to Richie, Eddie, Stan, and Mike. Pointing at Richie and Stan he said "You two, go back to your apartment. Mike, you can stay here if you need to, and Eddie I will see you later tonight. Got it?" They all mumbled assent. "Okay, then I will see you all later." With that, he and Madeline headed out the door.

"Good luck Bill!" Richie yelled out as Madeline walked out the door in front of Bill. "I can't believe you managed to get a date with one of

the Sanderson Sisters Bill! I'm such a big fan!" Bill glared at him and slammed the door as he left.

"Not one of my best but I think it deserved better than a glare," Richie complained as he went over to the kitchen to shake the rice off in the sink. "He'll understand better once he has the talk with her. The voice of a toad that women." It was silent for a second as the four remaining men all thought the same thing.

"She seemed—" Eddie started.

"Awful." Richie finished. No one disagreed with him.

"Well, I've got to go," Stan spoke up suddenly. "I have a night shoot in Central Park starting in an hour. Apparently, someone called into the office and told my editor that they saw Bigfoot somewhere near the Ramble so now I get to spend my Friday night creating fake shots for 'evidence'." He rolled his eyes, "Eddie, and I don't even want to hear the answer to this question because if the answer is anything other than no I don't think I would be able to hang out with you again, do you believe in Big Foot?"

"He's lying Eddie. I believe in Big Foot and he still hangs out with me." Richie chimed in.

Stan looked at Richie. "That's because you help me pay my rent. As soon as I'm not financially dependent on me we are no longer friends."

"I'll go with you. I've still got some stuff to unpack at my new apartment." Mike sighed, ignoring the banter between Stan and Richie. What Mike didn't tell Stan is that the only reason he wanted Stan with him was for the protection of an extra person from the super-soaker armed eleven-year-old boys who lived down his hall.

After they both left Richie jumped over the back of the couch to sit next to Eddie some of the rice flying off of his head and on to Eddie. "Wanna hear a secret Eds?"

"My name's Eddie thanks, and I'm pretty sure Bill told you to leave."

"Oh, Billy boy? He doesn't mean that. I mean he might but he loves

me too much to get mad at me for too long." He got on his knees in front of the couch and clasped his hands together in a begging position. "Oh, come on Eddie Spaghetti, I promise it'll make your day better." Eddie nodded his head in a relenting manner, but partially to get some of the rice off of him. Richie shot up back on the couch and sat directly next to Eddie. "I was the one who called the Big Foot rumor in. Also if he ever mentions his "UFO" photoshoot to you, that was me as well. 'Cept that time uh did muh spot-on British accent, I did." Richie says, with his last line in a very bad attempt at a British accent that sounded more like an Italian one.

He reverted back to his normal voice, "I'm basically that magazine's sole information source. The hopes and dreams of every crazy person in the city relies on my shoulders. It's a responsibility I take very seriously. If I were to stop the magazine might go under, and where would the great New York City be then? The crazies would go insane. Well, more insane. Stanley can give up one Friday night for the sake of this great city. " Much to Richie's surprise and glee, which was an emotion he'd rather not admit to feeling, Eddie started laughing uproariously at this.

Encouraged by this new willing person to perform to Richie continued and swung his arm around Eddie's back, "You know Eds. You've really put me in between a rock and a hard place by bailing on your wedding like you did. It's going to be really hard for me to continue banging your mom now that I know shes a homophobic asshole."

At this Eddie's smile drops and he puts his head in his hands and begins to cry again. This causes Richie to stand up and start panicking, pacing back and forth. "Oh fuck, shit! I'm so sorry Eds. That was too soon, wasn't it? Fuck! I always do this! I'm such a goddam idiot I-."

He is cut off by Eddie saying between sniffles, "It's- just- I can't believe my moms standards are- so low." Eddie pretends to wail once again.

Once Richie realizes what just happened his shit-eating smile grows back on his face, "Ouch Ed-meister. I mean really, I'm hurt. I didn't know you had that in you." He pauses and sits back down looking

earnestly at Eddie, “I’ll have to keep that in mind while I’m fucking your mom.”

“Beep-Beep, Richie” Eddie said, softly slugging Richie on the arm, but Eddie was smiling nonetheless.

2. The One With Dates and Laundry Rooms

Notes for the Chapter:

Hey y'all sorry that I am posting this practically a month after I posted the last chapter, but you know how it be. College and stuff.

Anyways just a fair trigger warning for this chapter there are a few instances where homophobic language is used. Also, there are some instances of antisemitism. It's not extreme but there are a few off-hand comments made by one of the characters.

If you guys want a reference as to what episode of Friends this chapter is, it vaguely follows the plot of The One With the East German Laundry Detergent. Of course not entirely because that would be boring for me to write!

Enjoy :)

The thing about Richie's job was, that while it sucked, the view made up for it. Not that the view was that great. One could even argue that the view was bad. New York office space did not come cheap and the space that Richie's workplace looked over was a recycling facility, which made the smell kind of gross as well. However, just the fact that the view existed and Richie was able to look at it instead of doing his work was enough. At Richie's last job his cubicle was in the middle of the office, meaning the only time he got to look outside was when he went to the water cooler, which was at least forty times a day. Undiagnosed ADHD was a bitch like that. This was one of the reasons, as he was told by his old boss, that he was laid off.

Although his new job was essentially worse in every way than his old one, his cubicle was now in the outer boundaries of the office, which gave him as much time to stare out the window as he wanted. However, this did not stop him from wasting company time. He probably spent the same amount of time not working at his current job as he did at his last one. For one reason or another, however,

Richie's boss had yet to fire him even though he objectively was worse at this job than he was at his previous job and he had been at this new one way longer already. (Richie was convinced his boss knew just how much he didn't like his job and only kept him on out of spite and menace.) In fact, Richie spent most of his working hours staring out the window of the 30th-floor coming up with different backstories for the little people as they passed by, which was the real reason the view was the only good aspect of his job. Every once in a while he would imagine that one of the people from the street that entered his building was a big-shot producer who heard Richie's stand-up at whatever shitty bar he had last performed at. They would come rushing into his drab little cubicle yelling, "Richie Tozier you hot piece of ass! You are the funniest man on the planet! Drop whatever you are doing right now! David Spade wants you to co-star with him in his next movie!" Of course, then Richie would tell them to hang on one second while he did something he had been wanting to do for a long time. Then he would head into his boss's office and flip him off, dump his coffee on his thousand-dollar suit, and then top it off with the perfect insult that ended with, "I quit asshole!"

So no, one could not say that Richie Tozier was particularly fond of his job, or even that he felt mediocre about his job. The only reason Richie got up in time to go to work in the morning was his fear of what Stan would do to him if Richie no longer had a stable income, making both of them homeless. Richie knew that if Stan and he were to get into a bum fight, Stan would be the one to come out alive. The last time Richie had lost his job Stan had made Richie dress up like the Yeti for an event Stan's magazine was holding. Richie's will wasn't strong enough to handle one of those conventions again.

Although, sometimes Richie wonders if being killed by a homeless version of his roommate would be preferable to having to interact with his co-workers. It would not be surprising to Richie if it ended up that he was dead this whole time and that Corporation Inc. (yes that was the actual name of the company) was just his version of the underworld. Richie was so fucking tired of having the same conversations over and over again about the weather, and politics, and Susan from Marketings marital problems, and whatever these people were going to be doing on their two precious days away from Hell. Of course, every once in a while one of The Losers, as Richie so

affectionately called them, would start talking about one of these subjects, but then Richie could just pretend to snore and they would stop. When Richie tried that with Greg from accounting when he started rambling on about some issue his eight-year-old was having with math, Richie had to go to a two-hour seminar with Barbra, the human resources lady, about respect in the workplace.

The worst of his co-workers was Henry Bowers, one of the companies Wall Street guys, who was an absolute ass-kisser to their boss. Bowers' was one of the most "My Dads a Lawyer" kind of person Richie had ever met, and quite possibly worst of all, Bowers had been a business major. Richie was pretty sure Bowers was guilty of insider trading and embezzling money from the company. Unfortunately for the company, but fortunately for Richie, Richie had no motivation to stop him. Besides, while Bowers had gone to Harvard, that was more of a legacy, dad-contributing-a-whole-bunch-of-money-and-having-a-building-named-after-him thing. Bowers was one of the least intelligent people that Richie had ever met. Hell, Richie put absolutely no effort into... well, whatever it was that he did, and he had still figured out what Bowers was up to, so he would end up probably getting caught anyway. But if he didn't, the company might go under and Richie would finally have an excuse to put all his energy into stand-up. A reason that wouldn't end with Stan on trial for Richie's murder.

Despite how much he hates his job and every single person that works there, Richie found himself about to purposefully talk to one of them one morning, specifically his boss. Now, Henry Bowers was mean, but Richie had dealt with plenty of douchebag bullies during his childhood, he knew how to deal with the Henry Bower's of the world. Richie's boss was just fucking scary. It seemed as if when he looked into your eyes that he could tell your worst fears and anxieties and then exploited them to get what he wanted. Richie was 1000% sure the guy was a psychopath and that if he hadn't murdered someone already he was only one bad day away from it. This was another reason why Richie wasn't so eager to quit. He didn't want to be the cause of the reason his boss had a bad day.

Richie stood outside his door for a while, attempting to build some sort of emotional shield around himself, before he finally knocked on the door. The door seemingly opened on its own creaking as it went

(although Richie knew it was just an automatic door controlled by a remote that his boss had, it still freaked him out.)

As soon as Richie stepped through the threshold of the room the door slammed back behind him and Richie was left with his boss in total darkness. Richie was not entirely certain as to what his boss actually looked like. Richie had never seen the man in any form of light. He never left his office, not to go to the bathroom or to hold office conference room meetings. Although there could have been a bathroom in his office, there was an equal chance that there could have also been a dead body in there. (If Richie was living twenty years later he might have cracked some joke about how this was like a Febreze commercial and when his boss turned on the light it would reveal some sociopathic disgusting torture chamber). This only further supported Richie's theory that his boss was some kind of demon. The only source of light in the room was the light projecting from his nameplate that said in bold print: Robert Pennywise.

It was silent for a minute. "Well," said Pennywise sharply causing Richie to jump a little, "get on with it Tozier. I'm a busy man. You have three minutes: starting now." Pennywise flipped over what Richie presumed to be an hourglass, but with how dark it was in the room and how bad Richie's eyesight was, he could not tell. This made Richie wonder for a second how Pennywise could possibly see in such darkness to do any sort of work or if he just turned off the lights every time Richie entered for the sole purpose of intimidating him. He desperately wanted to ask if the man was pleasuring himself and that's why the lights were off but a combination of not wanting to lose his job, not wanting to be murdered, and a reminder to himself that he was being timed stopped him.

"Well sir," Richie started approaching where he thought his boss's desk was, "I have a sort of favor to ask." Pennywise narrowed his eyes a bit at this. "See, I have this friend. I mean I have more than one friend. And I guess he's not really a friend yet, more of a friend of my friend who I think is slowly becoming my friend, but he just got here like a month ago so who's to say?." Richie saw the glow of Pennywise's eyes move, presumably towards the hourglass which was now a third of the way gone. "Anyways, sir, you don't care about any of that, but he's new to the city and I know Margaret just got transferred to Buffalo, so if the position is still open I would be

extremely thankful, sir, if you could consider Eddie, that's my kind-of-friend, for the position, sir. He has experience in the risk analysis position, which you can see," Richie dug through the unorganized mess that was his briefcase until he found what he was looking for, "here." Richie took a deep breath of relief out.

Richie stood in uncomfortable silence until Pennywise slowly reached out his hand without a word. Richie handed him the resume. He then stood there for a while longer not sure what to do because he couldn't read the other man's face.

Finally, Pennywise broke the silence, "Your time is up Tozier. Why are you still standing there? Can you move your body and go do your job or do I need to move you myself." The last statement was said with the words of a question but it sounded more like a threat.

Richie blinked for the first time since he had gotten there. "Oh no, sir. I just wasn't sure if... Thank you, sir." With that Richie left the room, the door slamming behind him as he stepped back into the harsh fluorescent light of the office.

If Richie was being honest that meeting went a lot better than he had been expecting it to. It was one of the only times he had spoken with the man that hadn't ended with his creepy fucking laugh, or him just yelling at Richie for his incompetence. One of the latter meetings had just been a month ago when Richie had accidentally forgotten he had the job. Those few hours before Bill reminded him of that fact were some of the most blissful of his life.

Richie had told Eddie that the meeting probably wasn't going to go well. "And even if it does," Richie had said, "You're not going to want to work there Eds. The bossman gives off a serious 'I eat children in my free time' kind of vibe." But of course, Eddie hadn't listened to him, rattling something about how he had to prove his mom and Myra, who had recently called to yell at him, wrong by getting a sensible, well-paying job. Richie had argued that he did not see the logic in this because if he had the chance to completely rewrite his life why wouldn't he choose to become a male stripper or something. But then Eddie started to tear up and Richie, the fucking weak-willed piece of shit, had no choice but to give Eddie's resume to Pennywise. "Fucking guilt-tripping bastard," Richie thought to himself as he went back to his cubicle and stared out the window

once more.

This was exactly the thought that Richie repeated to Eddie as soon as he entered in Bill's apartment, which had become notably cleaner in the month Eddie had lived there. Eddie looked up from the book he was reading. He had an apprehensive look in his eyes. "Did he not take it, Richie?"

Richie laid down on the floor taking off his tie and shoes as he did so. "No, he did. But you're lucky I like you so much Eddie Spaghetti because I would not talk to that man even if it meant saving the life of a person that I like even the slightest bit less than I like you."

Eddie scrunched his nose. "I'll let the name slide because of what you did for me, but if you don't put your shoes back on you have to go back to your own apartment. They smell like shit."

"I thought you deemed this a no shoes in the apartment abode. I thought it was, how did you put it to me," Richie did a terrible impression of Eddie "...fucking disgusting, do you know how much bacteria is on the sidewalks that your shoes walk on every day? Especially when you've never washed your shoes in your life, Richie.' You can't pick and choose when to have rules Eds. That's anarchy."

"Yeah, well, this apartment is currently under dictatorship rule, and the dictator is telling you to go to your apartment and wash your fucking feet before you make the whole apartment smell like its fucking infested with black plague-infected rats or you're banned from the apartment."

Richie jumped on the opposite side of the couch from where Eddie was sitting and extended his legs so that his feet were directly touching Eddie's face. Eddie fell off the couch in recoil while yelling, "Ack! Richie! That's fucking disgusting! I'm going to fucking kill you! Do you know how many diseases you probably have on your feet! I'm going to get athletes foot on my face! You asshole!" He walked into the bathroom while yelling more obscenities, but Richie could not hear them over the sound of the water.

Richie got up from laying on the couch and walked towards the door. "Aw, Eds you know you love me! Besides, I took my monthly shower two weeks ago, I can't be that gross!" Then he went across the hall to take a shower because, although he would never tell Eddie this, his

feet did smell.

Later that day, all seven of the losers were hanging out in Bill and Eddie's living room, with Eddie on the other side of the room from Richie glaring at him, still angry about "the foot incident" as he described it. "That makes it seem like you've got a foot fetish Eds," Richie snarked.

"Ben can you please tell Richie that I'm not talking to him, but that I said I hate him." Ben looked over to Richie to tell him the message but Richie was already speaking.

"Aw shucks Eddy Bear, I love you too. Unfortunately, you can't really hate me as I'll be a part of your family soon enough. Do you hear the wedding bells? Yes, sir, it's going to be Mr. Kasbrack from now on. But don't tell anyone, we want to keep it a secret for now for our love is forbidden."

Bev groaned and slapped Richie on the arm, "Will you two stop flirting for like two seconds! I'm trying to watch this show." She was lying, of course, the T.V was off, but it was enough to make Richie flustered.

"Flirting- I wasn't flirting with Eddie, no offense. I just prefer my sexual sphere's on the chest, not the pelvis. We were just-" Richie stuttered.

"Having a lovers quarrel?" Stan teased.

"Shut the fuck up Stan! What do you know? I was making a joke about fucking Eddie's mom. We were just kidding around, right Eddie?" Richie turned desperately towards Eddie. Richie ran his hand through his hair and adjusted his glasses, although they did not need fixing. Eddie did not respond. "In fact, I have a date that I have to leave for right now, with Greta." he spat with a mix of menace and a bit of spite. This was not true, but Richie knew that if he promised to pay for her meal, Greta would agree to go on a date with him. No one in this room needed to know that though.

The entire room besides Eddie and Richie groaned.

“R-Really, Richie? Gr-Greta? I t-thought that last t-time w-when she stole your Gameboy y-you said w-was the last time you would ever s-see her?” Bill contested.

“Oh, really Bill, you want to play that game? Hows that second date with Madeline going by the way? Or Gabby? How about Natalie?” Bill didn’t respond. “Exactly! Now if you’ll excuse me, I have a date.” With that he picked up his leather jacket and slammed the door behind him as he left.

Eddie was the first to speak up. “Who’s Greta?” he asked. This inspired the entire room to groan again.

“Greta is...” Mike began his sentence but could not seem to find the right word to describe her.

“Irritating.” finished Bev. “She once told me that I might be more successful if learned how to present myself in a more appealing way.”

Mike nodded, “When Crissy and I first separated she called the Jerry Springer Show.”

“She can’t seem to be bothered to remember my name so she always refers to me as “The Jewish One.” Stan grimaced.

“Told me she like me better when I was fat. She didn’t know me back then,” said Ben

“And her fucking laugh!” Bill added. The whole group chimed in with negative assent.

“That just sounds like Richie though,” Eddie argued.

“Yeah, but Richie doesn’t actually mean it when he says shit like that. He may not know when to stop but he has good, well actually, not completely evil intentions. Richie uses humor as affection. The things Greta says is just who she is to her core.” Mike countered.

“Richie’s more of a chaotic neutral, Greta’s just neutral evil.” Stan quipped. Eddie hummed in response and the rest of the room entered separate conversations, forgetting about the Haiwiann Shirt wearing man problem. Eddie would have pressed more on the Greta situation,

specifically about why Richie kept going back to her, but Eddie thought he knew part of the reason why. Maybe it wasn't for the same reasons as Eddie, but he knew better than anyone that sometimes you stay with someone not because you love each other, but because you are scared of what not being together means. There is a certain kind of comfort that comes with having someone that you can say you're in love with even if you are not. For Eddie, it meant that he didn't have to come out of the closet, and for Richie, this meant- well Eddie couldn't figure how this applied to Richie. However, from what he could tell so far about Richie, he didn't exactly seem like the type of person who likes to talk about his feelings so Eddie doubted anyone would know the answer. Richie seems more like the kind of person that, when confronted with any type of emotional situation would make some crude joke about your mom and then quickly change the subject.

Eddie was a little insulted that Richie was so appalled by the fact that the two were even jokingly flirting. In spite of how utterly appalling and disgusting the other man was, Eddie couldn't deny that he found Richie slightly attractive. Eddie might never admit it, but he was disappointed in the revelation that Richie was not interested in men, although Eddie didn't really know why he had his hopes up. It was fine though. Eddie knew that what he was made others uncomfortable sometimes, especially other men. Although it was a low standard Eddie was just glad Richie didn't call him a fairy or commit some kind of hate crime against him. Besides, Eddie had endured far worse from people from his hometown who had just assumed he was gay. And maybe Eddie was getting better but maybe he still thought he deserved it. Eddie shook those thoughts away and joined the rest of the group's conversation about Stan's new business idea: sexy sweatpants.

Richie hated admitting his friends were right, especially when he was so terribly wrong. Richie may have not been right that much in his relationship with all seven of them but he had never lost an argument. He either won the argument or made increasingly worse claims until the other side became so frustrated that they gave up. This was the only reason why Richie had not immediately left the

restaurant after Greta had claimed that Richie needed to get a nose job because his current nose made him look too “Jew-ey” and that maybe he would be more successful if he did so. Instead, he had just forced a grimace and said “Maybe,” and then had buried his nose back in his menu.

And that was just the beginning of the date. The rest of it had gone like this: Greta had ordered the most expensive thing on the menu, Greta tried to convince Richie to join her pyramid scheme, Greta yelled at the waiter for interrupting her, Greta proposed that Richie move in with her, Richie choked on his alfredo noodles, the hostess gave Richie the Heimlich maneuver, Greta accused the hostess of trying to steal her man, Richie excused himself to the bathroom, Richie got stuck in the window trying to escape the date, Richie twisted his ankle falling from the bathroom window and had to hobble back to the table and explain to Greta what happened, Richie managed to get a taxi and leave before Greta finished haggling the manager into giving them a free meal and realizes Richie was gone.

This chain of events was how Richie found himself at Bev’s apartment at midnight having an existential crisis on her couch with her aunt’s cat, Sundae, on his stomach, his head in Bev’s lap while she ran his hair through her hands as he ranted.

“- just can’t keep doing this to myself, Bev. She might be the worst person I have ever met, and she wants to move in with me. What does that say about myself? Am I a terrible person? Actually you know what, fuck you don’t answer that. I have to break up with her. I have to break up with her and I have to do it in a way that makes it so there is absolutely no possible way of me crawling back to her ever again. I just don’t know what to-.” He looked up at Bev with his eyes widened and a mischievous grin on his face.

Bev pushed Richie up so he was sitting up on the couch and she turned towards him with her eyes narrowed. “Richie, I love you. But also I hate you and I’m not being part of whatever scheme you’ve created.” Richie tried to speak but Bev continued, “Do you remember Earth Day 1995? You told me to pretend to be a senior citizen so we could get a discount at Radio Shack. Which I was fine with because I desperately needed a new T.V. But then when that old man started hitting on me you didn’t stop him because and I quote ‘...but Gam

Gam, you haven't gotten jiggy with it since ol' Gramps died.”

“To be fair that old man was basically just an old Brad Pitt. You would have been lucky to hit that. Second, you haven't even heard the plan it might not even involve you!” Richie argued.

“Does it though?”

“I mean, yes.” Bev rolled her eyes. “But all you have to do is break up with her for me, and pretend we're dating so she'll stop bothering me and preferably hate my guts for the rest of my life.”

“What the hell Tozier! I'm not doing that.” Bev shoved Richie on the shoulder. If Bev was being honest this was not the worst request Richie had ever asked of her, nor was it the first time he had ever asked her to pretend to be his girlfriend. In fact, Bev met Richie when he ran into her on the street and instantly proposed. Bev later found out this was an act to ward off some guy that had been following her and Bev decided immediately that she needed to be friends with whoever would go to such odd extremes to help her. Thus adding Bev, and once they started dating, Ben to the Losers. Richie and Bev had pretended several times after that to be a couple in order to get some sort of discount at the mall. However, while Bev was willing to screw over major corporations, she drew the line at messing with some girl's feelings, even when that girl was the worst person Bev had ever met.

Richie brushed off his shoulder. “Oh come on Bev. It's not that big of a deal. Besides, you owe me. Remember, Hell's Kitchen...the music store incident...”

“I do not owe you for the music store incident. You were the one that knocked me over and made me destroy all those records because you thought you saw Gillian Anderson. You deserved to pay for all those records. If anything you owe me for it because you got me banned from the only music store whose owner didn't talk down to me every time I tried to buy a fucking Green Day album .”

Richie groaned and ran his hands through his hair. “Please Bev. You're really good at letting people down easy. You dumped Bill and you guys are still best friends. It'll be easier with Greta because I

don't want to ever see her again. I'll owe you big time. I-I won't make a "Your mom" joke for a week."

"Bill and I mutually broke up and no."

"Fine, two weeks."

"No."

"A month! A whole month! These jokes are my heart and soul Marsh. I am not a man without these jokes. I wouldn't give them up for anything." Richie was staring at Bev with pleading eyes.

"I said no Trashmouth. You know I love you, but you gotta handle this one yourself."

"Aw shucks, Marsh you and your rigid moral code are gonna be the death of me." Bev knew Richie was joking but when she looked deeper into Richie's eyes she could have sworn she saw some deep sadness, but it was gone as quickly as it had arrived. She knew she needed to change the subject for his sake.

"So, Tozier speaking of my moral code, I think you have to apologize to Eddie."

Richie felt bad for what he had said to Eddie. No really, he did. Richie isn't homophobic. He doesn't care that Eddie is gay. He just... actually he wasn't sure what set him off. He supposes he is just scared of other people thinking he is gay. Which he isn't. He told enough crude jokes to make He-man look effeminate. Although maybe that does make him homophobic. He is scared, phobic, of people thinking he was gay, homo. Did that make him a bad person? Was he as bad as Ronald Reagan? Was Ronald Reagan scared that people were going to think he was gay? Anyways that doesn't matter. What mattered was that Richie hurt Eddie and he needed to make it up to him. Richie wasn't exactly one for apologies. Apologies generally meant talking about your feelings, which was something that Richie was majorly averse to. Whenever Richie needed to make up something to someone, he did it in favors, not words. So, when Richie found out that Eddie had never done his own laundry before and he needed someone to teach him how, Richie jumped at the opportunity.

“You know Spaghetti, out of the two of us I would have never guessed in a million years that you would be the one that still couldn’t do his laundry six years into adulthood,” Richie said as the two men walked down the stairs towards the basement with their laundry bags.

“Fuck off Richie don’t fucking call me that. One, it’s a fifty-fifty shot. If you can’t get that in a million years then you are even dumber than I thought. Two, I still doubt that you can do your laundry. I’ve been in your apartment and if you can do your laundry then it’s the only form of cleaning you know how to do. I was so close to calling the health department the last time I was there. You do know that you can wash your fucking dishes right? You know what? I should have never told you about this. The only reason I agreed to let you do this was that literally everyone else had something else to do. You, Richie Tozier, were my last choice. I wouldn’t have subjected myself to an afternoon stuck with you and your shitty accents in the laundry room if I had any other options.”

“Aww, you flatter me Eds. 'Ow cooehld I 'ave gahtten so loehcky to be friends wit a goehy like you. Oh, fuck sorry about that. I’m trying out an Irish voice. I think I’m going to call him Ryan O’Ryan.”

“That’s the worst name I’ve ever heard,” Eddie deadpanned.

“That’s the point Eddie-pie.” Richie threw his arm over Eddie’s shoulder. “Oh, goody we’re here. Now, Eddie, I don’t know if you know this, but the laundry room is a place where you can clean your clothes. Instead of hand washing your clothes and then hanging them out to dry you can put your clothes in magic boxes that clean your clothes for you.”

“Fuck off asshole. Just open the goddamn door.” Eddie pushed Richie’s arm off his shoulder with his free hand.

“Touchy, touchy, Ed-meister. No need to swear, I am but your loyal servant. But first, what’s the magic word?”

“I hate you.”

Richie had dropped his laundry basket on the floor by this point and

had resorted to using his detergent bottle as a fake microphone as he spoke as a Game Show Host, “Oh, I am sorry that is incorrect Eds, the magic word was actually, ‘Richie Tozier is an incredibly sexy beast.’ I’m afraid you’ll have to try again tomorrow, although I do have to warn you, the password does change every day.”

Eddie shoved Richie out of the way, “Oh, fuck off. I’ll just do it.” Eddie opened the door to the laundry room only to recoil in disgust. “What the fuck!”

Richie shoved past Eddie, his laundry tote in hand. He set it down and started wafting the air into his nose with elongated gestures. “Ah yes, the ever lingering smell of the Laundry Room. You know scientists say that the smell originates from a witch who was killed by one of the laundry machines and she cursed this room so that her stench would haunt the residents of this building for the rest of eternity.” Richie waggled his fingers in a mock spell-casting way.

Eddie entered the laundry room peering around, his nose wrinkling even more whenever he saw mold or dust or anything of that nature. “Jesus Christ it’s so fucking disgusting in here. Why didn’t you tell me it was like this Richie. And what is that fucking thing!”

Eddie was pointing towards a large greenish-brown pile that looked a little bit like styrofoam because of the way it was shaped but if one looked even slightly closer and smelled it, there was no doubt that this was some other element entirely.

Richie glanced over lazily at what Eddie was pointing at. “Oh, that? Yeah, that’s the Sticky Pile of Unidentifiable Substance or the SPUS for short. No one really knows what it is, but it’s been down here for ages. Even Mr. Heckles says it was here before he moved in and he’s lived here for like forty years.” Richie picked at something that had gotten stuck in his teeth with his fingernail. “I tried to get Stan to bet me money to eat some of it once because I wanted to get ‘Sonic the Hedgehog 2’ but Stan refused because he ‘Didn’t want to have to deal with the scent of my dead body in his apartment for a year.’ And then I said that it already smelled like a dead body in our apartment, and then he made me get rid of the hamster cage that was making our apartment smell like that.”

Eddie didn't take any time to process... whatever that was before continuing, "I'm going to get a least ten bacterial infections from being down here. And I'm wearing shorts! Shorts Richie! That puts me at a much higher risk of infection. Do you know the risk of exposed skin to-." Richie cuts him off by putting a finger to Eddie's lips.

"Aw Eds don't worry, as much as I appreciate the sight of you in your shorts, it may smell like a sewer down here but the worst disease you're going to get down here is from Mr. Heckle's underwear that he leaves in the machine. Besides, they don't charge us to do laundry down here. Well, technically they do but Stan and I glued quarters into the slots years ago and the landlord can't pin that on us and they can't afford to get new machines. Which is partially our fault because, you know, we made it so they can't make money from the laundry machines. Also, the quicker you do it the quicker you can leave." Eddie seemed to be calmed slightly by this but he still pulled one of his shirts from his basket and fashioned a mask over his mouth with it. "Now, first step of doing your wash, you are going to want to separate your lights and your darks from each other. Think of the washing machine as a gentrified neighborhood."

Despite the smell, and the lack of natural, or really any, light in the laundry room, both men had a rather good time that afternoon. Richie took in absolute delight whenever Eddie had even the slightest question about how to do his laundry, and an even greater delight whenever Eddie had to pull down the shirt off of his face to make some sort of snarky remark back. While waiting for their laundry to finish washing they sat on top of the washing machines across from each other. Although, Richie, because of his unnatural tallness, was unable to do so without slouching in such a way that virtually guaranteed a bad back when he got older. And Eddie had only been willing to do so after Richie agreed to put one of his sheets on top of the machine. To anyone who had walked in it would have been a very odd sight indeed. They passed the time with Eddie throwing peanut M&M's into Richie's mouth and by trying to see how many Richie could fit in his mouth without choking (it was 30). And then, when Richie had told Eddie that he was lactose intolerant, Eddie started freaking out and scattered M&Ms everywhere which prompted one of the building rats to come scurrying out of the walls.

Eddie almost had a heart attack at this sight and took five puffs of his inhaler and a couple of antibiotic pills from his fanny pack but Richie just laughed and said, “Aw poor William. I’ve been forgetting to feed him lately.”

“Did you name,” *puff* “that fucking rat” *puff* “after Bill.”

“Nah, I’m pretty sure Bill’s name is short for Billiam, not William.” Richie waved Eddie off.

The room was silent for a while after this, not including the noise of the laundry machines, as Eddie was no longer willing to throw M&M’s for fear of the return of William. The silence left the two men to their own thoughts. It was not uncomfortable, however, but the kind of silence you get when you have been hanging out with someone you have been friends with for much longer than Eddie and Richie had been.

Finally, Eddie spoke up again. He cleared his throat. “Hey, Richie. I’ve been meaning to ask, why’d you freak out the other day, when, uh, when Stan made...that comment about us?” He hurriedly added, “You don’t have to answer if you don’t want to. It was a stupid fucking question anyways. I don’t really care that much.” But he did.

Richie, who had been laying down on the machines, shot straight up at this comment, smacking his head on the dryers hanging above him. “Fuck that hurt!” He rubbed his forehead with his hand and waved his other hand at Eddie who was moving to approach Richie, “No, no you don’t need to come over here I’m fine. I’m fine. What do you have to say about it, Edgar Meier Weiner?”

Richie was very good at hiding his feelings. So good, in fact, that if you had not been friends with him for a very long time, you would never know exactly how much approaching this topic made Richie extremely uncomfortable. But there were little ways you could tell when Richie was not fine: His smile would become bigger than it normally was, his leg would stop incessantly tapping, and he would start pushing his hair back more often. Yes, Eddie would get there eventually and although the two had already adopted the mannerisms of people who had been friends for longer than they had, this could not make up for truly knowing a person. They acted like

they had been friends for years, but Eddie and Richie had still not grown fully accustomed to knowing who the other truly was, therefore they could not detect when there was something wrong with the other.

Eddie looked at the ground, “No its nothing it’s just- It’s nothing.” The way Eddie thought about it was that if Richie was ignoring that it happened then there was no reason to bring it up again. Eddie could go back to pretending he was fine with what happened if Richie did. Eddie felt like he was pushing his luck anyways. He had been so lucky to find friends that didn’t care that he was gay, but if he pushed it to the next level and made them think about that fact and what it means... They might decide to rescind their acceptance. Eddie thought he might if he was them.

Richie spoke up again, “Honestly Eds, I’ll talk about it if you want to. It’s not that-”

Eddie jumped off the washing machine, “I said it’s fine!” he snapped. There was a silence. “I forgot my dryer sheets upstairs. I’ll be right back.” Eddie left the laundry room quickly, leaving Richie in an uncomfortable silence even though there was no one else in the room to share it with.

Richie didn’t know what he’d done wrong. For once he was willing and able to talk about something that was difficult for him and Eddie had what? Ran away? He was the one who had brought it up! It wasn’t fucking fair. Richie was finally going to get the chance to honest to god apologize instead of just making up for his misdeed through some bullshit thing like the fucking coward he was. He had actually wanted to apologize! He had wanted to talk about his feelings! Now there was still this guilt on his conscience and it was all Eddie’s fault.

What Richie didn’t think about was why it mattered to him that he didn’t get to apologize to Eddie. Why did he feel more guilt to Eddie than he did to others when he had done worse before? Why did this chasm between him and Eddie bother him so much? Why was Richie so scared of Eddie never forgiving him? What was so different about Eddie? These were things Richie almost thought, but whatever protective wall he had built himself when he was younger saved

prevented him from thinking them. The wall filtered these thoughts down, so instead of having to deal with them, Richie was just pissed at Eddie.

So, when Eddie came rushing back into the laundry room, Richie didn't even notice that Eddie had not even slightly recoiled at the smell or taken some sort of preventative measure to save himself from the bacteria or that there was a noticeable lack of dryer sheets in his hands. Richie just knew that he was angry. He slid off the washing machine he had been sitting on and crossed his arms, "Hey asshole, I wasn't done."

Eddie went over to Richie and covered up his mouth with his hand. "Shut up," Eddie hissed. "I don't have much time to explain this to you. I went upstairs and Greta was in Bill and I's apartment looking for you." Richie had told Eddie all the details about his and Greta's date while Eddie had been throwing M&M's into his mouth. This included the fact that Greta asked Richie to move in with her and that Richie hated her absolute guts and his whole plan with Bev that she had vehemently shot down. Eddie had agreed to come up with a plan to ward her off from Richie so much that he would never be able to crawl back to her again. "Bill had told her that you were out with me but that he didn't know where that was."

This was a lie Bill had made it very clear he knew where Richie and Eddie were going to be when he had yelled out, "Say hi to William for me," as Richie and Eddie had left with their laundry baskets. Thinking back Eddie should have known the level of vileness that was waiting for him downstairs just by this sentence.

"...so she was going to just wait there until we got back, but then she saw me with the dryer sheets and she immediately knew. And I ran down here as fast as I could but I know she's following me. She pretended not to know where I was going but it was kind of obvious. So, anyways, basically what I'm saying is we have absolutely no time to come up with any sort of reasonable plan, but I did come up with a half baked idea while running down here and I don't think you'll like it but it's your only shot at getting rid of her for good."

“What do-” However, Richie was interrupted by the sound of the laundry door being thrown open by Greta and Eddie grabbing Richie by the collar, pushing him up against the washing machine and feverously making out with him.

This was only for a split second though because when Greta yelled out “Richie Tozier!” Eddie shoved Richie off of him and mocked a look of surprise and fear. Richie didn’t need to fake this look.

“Gr-Greta! What are you doing here? It’s not what it looks like?” To anyone else, this sentence would have sounded fake and almost satirical, but Greta took no notice of this tone in Richie’s voice.

“Richie Tozier!” She approached the pair of men wagging her finger. “I should have known you were a poof!” She turned her glare towards Eddie, “And you! I guess I know why you were in such a hurry to get back down here. I bet you thought I didn’t deduce where you two were hiding. But lucky for me, my father was a cop and he taught me the skills of subtle investigation, otherwise, I might have had to live with... with a fag!” She turned back to look towards Richie. “Richie Tozier, we are through! This is the last straw! You can come crawling back to me when you finally get over this... this illness, but I won’t take you back! Not ever! You know my parents warned me that you might be one of them, but I defended you! I said, ‘No not my Richie!’ But look at me now. I have been rendered a fool.” Greta scoffed one last time before turning around and walking towards the door. But not before stepping in the SPUS.

“Ack! This is a room of horrors! You two deserve it.” she screamed and ran away.

Eddie turned around so he was facing Richie. “Well, I think that solves your problem. I would say you owe me like a million favors for that because your breath is absolutely nauseating, but I did just make-out with you without asking permission.” He paused, “You’re not mad at me for that right?”

Richie was still shell shocked by everything that just happened but he gathered himself and ran his hand through his hair and put on his biggest smile, “Oh yeah, Eddy-Bear. I am a-okay. I’m just worried that you are going to catch feelings because I am an infamously good

kisser. Richier the Kisser they call me.”

Eddie smirked at Richie, relieved that the taller of the two men wasn’t mad at him. “Well, no need to worry about that. My type of guy has more than three shirts that don’t say something along the lines of ‘FBI: Female Body Inspector’ and has less than thirty Hawaiian shirts.”

Okay, so maybe Richie was fucked.

At 8 a.m god isn’t real, but the devil is. Richie found himself at this time on a Monday (maybe Garfield was right) in his bosses office surrounded in its usual aroma of darkness and uncomfortable silence. The smell of lemony detergent was especially strong this day which made Richie even more uneasy about the reason that he had been called in here.

“Tozier!” Pennywise barked suddenly. “I looked over the resume you gave me. You can tell Kaspbrak he’s got the job.”

Richie grinned. “Right. Thank you, sir. I’ll be sure to tell him.”

As Richie left his boss’s office he couldn’t help but smile even more. He hated his job, but now there was something to look forward to about it. The risk analysis desk was right next to his cubicle and Richie couldn’t wait to spend his work hours with Eddie.

Richie had spent a lot of time, almost a worrying amount frankly, thinking about what had happened between the two of them in the laundry room on Saturday. He had come to the conclusion that no, just because he felt more in that five-second makeout session that any kind of physical interaction with a girl did not mean he was attracted to Eddie. Richie was not gay. It was just the surprise of the kiss and the adrenaline of the situation that made him feel like he did. And had he felt a different, more powerful way towards Eddie afterward and felt a kind of disappointed that he had never experienced before when Eddie told Richie that he was not his type? Sure, Richie was willing to admit that. But both could be explained away by the fact that Richie just liked validation and when Eddie didn’t fulfill that

need, Richie's emotions had reacted that way.

Richie was fine.

Everything is fine.

Richie had more important things on his mind like how he would have to somehow convince Greg that Eddie's last name really was Spaghetti.

Richie couldn't wait to tell Eddie the good news and promptly spent the rest of the day ignoring his work thinking about how Eddie would react and how thankful he would be to Richie and how from now on, Richie was going to be able to spend eight hours a day right next to Eddie Kaspbrak. Therefore, by the time five o'clock rolled around, Richie was already out the door.

Richie didn't even bother to say hi to any of the Loser's when he entered Central Perk an hour later. Nor, did he pay any mind to the rest of his surroundings, which is how he found himself on the floor, having tripped over a 'Help Wanted' sign. However, Richie didn't let this stop him from his mission and he immediately got up and without mentioning what had just happened he said, "Eddie 'Spaghetti Kaspbrak', am I the greatest person in the world or what?"

Eddie looked around from the center of the couch at the five people surrounding him and crossed his arms to his chest, "Or what. And that's not my fucking middle name asshole, you know that."

Richie pinched Eddie's cheek, and Eddie quickly slapped Richie's hand away. "Aw, but Eds I did something nice for you. I talked to my boss this morning and you got the job!"

Eddie looked surprised but not very happy. He looked down at the ground, "Oh, great. Thanks, Richie."

This was not the reaction that Richie had envisioned throughout the day. He slid in between Eddie and Mike, softly slugging the former on

the shoulder, “Come on Eds show a little enthusiasm! I did have to fuck his mom to get him to give you it. And let me tell you she was not a pleasant lay.” There was a “Beep, Beep Richie!” from the chair Ben and Bev were sitting in.

Eddie looked up, evidently having made a decision. “Actually, you know what? Tell him thanks but no thanks.” Richie looked at him flabbergasted. “No really. I just- It’s like what you said right? I’m getting this once in a lifetime chance to rewrite my life and I-I don’t want to waste it you know. The only reason I became a fucking risk analyst in the first place is because my mom thought it would be a good idea and then the only reason I stayed with it is because when I suggested changing my job Myra threw a fit about me throwing my life away, and how I didn’t love her because I wasn’t going to be able to support her. So now that I’m here, I can’t just reside in my comfort anymore or, I’ll just be the same as I was before.”

“I m-mean that’s gr-great and all Eddie, but you do need m-money in the real world. How ar-are you going to pay r-rent or f-for f-food?” Bill raised his eyebrows.

“I’ll figure it out. This is a spur of the moment thing. I don’t really know what I actually want to do. I didn’t have that kind of choice before. But for now-” He glanced over at the Help Wanted sign that Richie had fallen over earlier, “-now I’ll just get a job here.” He gestured around at the coffee shop.

There was a silence until Ben nods, “Good for you Eddie.” The rest of the Losers chime their agreements, some more enthusiastically than others. No one, not even Richie himself really, notices the disappointment on Richie’s face.

Notes for the Chapter:

Don’t blame Richie for being stupid. Unfortunately, he lives in the 90s so he hasn’t gone through the year of our lord, Kylie Jenner, 2016, the year of realizing things. Also, it is definitely cannon that Richie is the kind of person that is lactose intolerant but eats milk anyways and just deals with the consequences, despite his friend’s objections.

As always I hope you guys enjoyed. Please comment and bookmark and leave a kudos if you enjoyed it. Leave a suggestion for an episode you might want me to do, etc.

Author's Note:

So yes, that is my writing. I hoped you liked it. Please like it and comment and stuff. I am a college student so I'm not exactly sure what my update schedule is going to be as I want to pass my classes. However, this is the first thing that I have been actually motivated to do in a while so we will have to see. Also please ignore the fact that Mario Cart: Super Circuit was in fact not out in the 90s.

Thanks for reading!!!

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